

**REMARKS**

Overview of the Above Amendments:

The specification has been amended at page 6, to correct obvious typographical errors. Additionally, text at pages 12-13 objected to in parent application serial no. 09/011,910 has been deleted as the page numbers listed in the table of contents would not match with pages in the printed patent. An Abstract also accompanies this amendment.

Claims 9-17, 19 and 20 have been cancelled as directed to non-elected subject matter. Additionally, Claim 18 has been amended to read in independent format and to delete multiple dependencies. These embodiments are now present in new claims 21-23.


Entry of the foregoing amendments is respectfully requested.

Please direct all further written communications in this application to:

Alisa A. Harbin, Esq.  
Chiron Corporation  
Intellectual Property - R440  
P.O. Box 8097  
Emeryville, CA 94662-8097

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 3/18/04

By:   
Roberta L. Robins  
Registration No. 33,208

CHIRON CORPORATION  
Intellectual Property – R440  
P. O. Box 8097  
Emeryville, CA 94662-8097  
Telephone: 510-923-2708  
Facsimile: 510-655-3542

## ABSTRACT

A 24kd protein capable of binding the E2 envelope protein of hepatitis C virus (HCV), and functionally equivalent variants or fragments of the 24kd protein, are disclosed. Processes for production and purification of the 24kd protein, and functionally equivalent variants or fragments thereof, are also disclosed, as are methods for using the protein to screen for chemical compounds that bind HCV.